

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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R 100546Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2531

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BTRA, SN, MY

SUBJ: MALAYSIAN IMMIGRATION CRACKDOWN ON SINGAPORE BUSINESSMEN

1. SUMMARY: MALAYSIAN IMMIGRATION HAS REPORTEDLY BLACKLISTED 200 SINGAPOREAN BUSINESSMEN FROM ENTRY "FOR PLEASURE", SAYING THE 200 WERE ACTUALLY DOING BUSINESS IN JOHORE AND ITS ENVIRONS DURING SUCH TRIPS. THE MOVE APPARENTLY RECIPROCATES SINGAPORE IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND MAY DETER SOME SINGAPOREAN INVESTMENT AND BUSINESS IN JOHORE. END SUMMARY.
2. NEWSPAPER REPORTS IN SINGAPORE MAY 8 AND 9 INDICATE THAT MALAYSIAN IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES HAVE BLACKLISTED 200 SINGAPOREAN BUSINESSMEN FROM CROSSING THE CAUSEWAY TO JOHORE, PENDING THEIR ACQUISITION OF PROPER BUSINESS VISITOR PASSES (I.E. WORK PERMITS). THEY WERE REPORTEDLY LIVING IN SINGAPORE AND DOING BUSINESS IN MALAYSIA THROUGH FREQUENT "VISITS FOR PLEASURE".
3. PRESS REPORTS INCLUDED BANNER HEADLINES IN STRAITS TIMES MAY 8 AND SAID PASSES ARE DESIGNED TO ENSURE THAT JOBS WHICH COULD BE HELD BY MALAYSIANS DO NOT GO TO ALIENS. IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS ARE REPORTED TO HAVE MADE "SURPRISE RAIDS" ON FACTORIES TO CATCH THE ERRING SINGAPOREANS.

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4. A MALAYSIAN HIGH COMMISSION OFFICIAL INFORMED US THAT

TECHNICALLY THE BUSINESS VISIT PASS WAS DIFFERENT FROM A VISA AND WOULD BE REQUIRED OF ALL BUSINESSMEN, REGARDLESS OF NATIONALITY. HOWEVER, HE SAID THIS REGULATION WAS AIMED PRIMARILY AT "MINOR PETTY TRADERS" (READ: SINGAPOREANS) WHO TRY TO AVOID WORK PERMIT REGULATIONS AND A SIMILAR RESTRICTION IS IMPOSED BY THE GOS ON MALAYSIANS WHO WANT TO VISIT SINGAPORE FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES. THE OFFICIAL ADDED THAT THE REQUIREMENT FOR A BUSINESS PASS IS NOTHING NEW AND HE WAS NOT SURE WHY THE ACTION BY MALAYSIAN IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS RECEIVED SUCH HEADLINES IN THE PRESS.

5. COMMENT: THIS APPEARS TO BE ANOTHER SMALL STEP THAT WILL DISCOURAGE SINGAPOREAN INVESTMENT AND BUSINESS ACTIVITIES IN JOHORE. SOME SINGAPOREAN BUSINESSMEN AFFECTED HAVE ALREADY INDICATED THEY WILL MERELY WITHDRAW FROM BUSINESS ACTIVITIES THERE. IF THIS BUSINESS IS NOT TAKEN UP BY MALAYSIANS, THE PRESENT DEMAND MAY GO UNSATISFIED OR PERHAPS TURN TO SINGAPORE.

6. FOR KUALA LUMPUR: WE WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY COMMENTS. COPIES OF ARTICLES BEING MAILED TO KUALA LUMPUR AND EA/IMS. CRONK

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